

LIGHTS ON THE LAKES

THEY FLASH WARNING MESSAGES TO THE SHIPS.

Seventy Light Stations Serve to Guide Lake Michigan Mariners Through Fog and Storm—How the Lights Are Tended—Code of Signals Used.

When the wintry gales howl over the great lakes and ice floes dash against shore and about the foundations of lighthouses the lot of the keeper is not a happy one. When cyclonic storms rage in spring or autumn, when the inland seas are dotted with craft, under press of sail or driven by steam, then indeed the men who are responsible for the aids to navigation have no time for idle dreaming. There was a time when the setting in of the winter would send many keepers to winter quarters; when lights would be put out for the long vacation decreed by Jack Frost, but in the ninth district—the one embracing the 1,100 miles of Lake Michigan—that time has passed.

Six hundred dollars a year is not a big salary. It seems to be still smaller when one considers the nature of the employment, where difficulties and often dangers imminent and terrifying surround. Lighthouse-keepers on the sea coast or around the lakes face perils landmen are unacquainted with, and which landmen can scarcely appreciate, yet a paternal government is "fully advised," as they say in court, that \$50 a month is a good salary for such servants. Cold, possible privation, possible loss of life itself, are no reasons for increasing the stipend. Men will serve for that salary and the law says it is enough.

Of course, suitable quarters are provided for the keepers. But of all happenings to mortal man isolation, the absolute severance of all communication with his kind, is the worst punishment. Isolation for the greater portion of the year is the portion of him who keeps a light. His home may be, nay, frequently is, out on some jutting reef, removed from land by several hundreds of yards of open water. When the breezes blow too strongly he is cooped in his exposed dwelling as effectually as would be the case if old ocean rolled between him and the shore.

No lake in the great chain has as many sail on its bosom as Lake Mich-

igan. None has traffic any larger, if as large, and none is traversed as late in the winter season. The ninth district embraces all of Lake Michigan, Green Bay and tributary waters. The eastern limit is a line drawn north and south just east of Old Point Mackinac light in Michigan. This winter lights blazon the pathways of daring mariners as far north as the straits, for the station at Seul Choix Point has not been closed.

Men will go down to the sea in ships even when ice floes gather on the shoals and follow the currents in the lakes. These floes may be driven with irresistible force inland or out into the open waters, endangering the stanchest craft ever launched. Wrecks innumerable almost line the treacherous shores of Michigan, yet mariners still cast their fortunes to the winds without even an anchor to windward. If they must sail, then they must have aids to navigation. Hence it is that the keepers, aboriginal and American—a strange assemblage of terms, yet one much affected in polite articles—are on duty when snow-drifts pile up about their houses and ice forms a long and safe bridge to the land, possibly far distant.

A Dangerous District. There are many lights in the ninth district. No lake in the chain is so turbulent and so treacherous as Lake Michigan. Storms which would do but little damage if their forces were expended on broad Superior or Huron when sweeping over Michigan lake cause a woeful disturbance to shipping. Dangerous reefs abound in the tracks of shipping. Shoals protrude their slime-covered noses to grasp the hulls of vessels which deviate from their courses. Rocky beaches on which gallant ships may founder and pound to bits are thick from one end to the other.

The fate of the Calcora, the stanch steamer which put out from Milwaukee four years ago and has never been heard from since, has not deterred the hardy masters and seamen of Lake Michigan from hazarding all on the lake in the dead of winter. In fact, recent years have seen an enormous increase in winter navigation. Where twenty years ago all vessels would go into haven early in November and remain in shelter until the ice left the Soo in the spring, now many a vessel is in commission twelve months in the year. The authorities have taken notice of the extent of winter navigation, and in many an isolated and exposed station all discretion has been taken from the light-keepers. They are under orders to keep their lights trimmed and burning throughout the entire winter. Others whose stations are exposed to great dangers must remain as long as in their judgment can be done with safety.

Heretofore stations in the northern third of the lake have been closed with the arbitrary close of navigation as fixed by the board of marine underwriters. But now the stations at Plum Island, Pottawatoni, Poverty Island, Seul Choix Point, Beaver Island, South Fox Island, North Fox Island, North and South Manitou, Sherwood Point and Sturgeon Bay have been added to those open for the entire winter. The light ships in the dangerous straits remain out as long as it is safe.

The following table shows the number of lighthouses, keepers, assistants, vessels, for signals, etc., at present established in the district:

Masters of light vessels.....	4
Keepers of light stations.....	70
Assistant keepers of light stations.....	63
Light stations.....	70
Steam fog signals.....	28
Steam fog sirens.....	3
Fog bells.....	7
Light vessels.....	4
Gas buoys.....	9
Bell buoys, automatic.....	1
Iron can buoys.....	19



LAKE MARINERS' BEACON LIGHTS.

Iron nun buoys.....13
Wood spar buoys.....74

The stations on Beaver and South Fox Islands are well out in the open lake, miles away from the mainland, exposed to all the rigors of the stormiest season. They are well up to the north, and the men who send out the welcome shafts of light to warn mariners are cut off from their kind much of the year. Let navigation cease entirely, and they would be exposed to dangers greater than any to be found on land, no matter how isolated. One can always walk on land to find a bite to eat, if it be nothing more than dog meat. On the water it is different, as lighthouse-keepers realize before many winters have been passed in this service.

Away up on the south coast of the northern peninsula is a point on the rock coast. Seul Choix, it is called, the name having been given by the French settlers years ago. On that point is a lighthouse with a fixed white light, which flashes from Manitou to the west to Squaw Island on the east. It envelops in its shaft of brilliancy that other little sand and rock spit which travels under the singular alias of Whisky Island. It sheds its light over

that on the Chicago pier, revolve with alternate red and white flashes. Intervals vary even if lights are the same. Gross Point carries a double flash of irregular intervals. Calumet pier head shows a steady red light. Wind Point has a revolving light and a steady red showing south to cover Racine harbor. Every station flashes its signal according to the cipher fixed for it.

The same rules apply to the fog signals. If steam whistles the blasts are one, two, three, etc., long or short, alternately long and short, with intervals between blasts fixed by seconds of time. So when a ship master sees a light flashing red across his bows he counts the time until he is greeted by another flash. The colors and intervals tell him which station he is nearing. If the siren sings a particular song he knows what direction to take to avoid impending danger. Thus all up and down the lake over its hundreds of miles of navigable waters these signals warn or cheer the men who sail in ships.

One Cincinnati Industry. Cincinnati claims to make 20,000 bug cages, 25,000 rat traps, 120,000 fly traps and 300,000 sleeves out of wire annually.

Not far from the stately dwelling erected for the use of the keeper and his family is an old hutch. It is dismantled, wavering in intention and wholly dissolute. It is not a fit habitation for man or beast, according to the lights of the civilized white man. Yet it was for years the home of the keeper. Not that the government houses its employees in such disreputable homes. Not at all. It was the home of the keeper from choice. It was not even the "only choice," as the name of the station might indicate, but it was the choice of Keeper Fountaine. Fountaine is an Indian, and the bright new brick house erected for his use was too much for his primitive notions of comfort.

So for years Fountaine and his squaw and papposes lived in the little hutch which has since been turned into a coalhouse. He built it and he loved it and was loath to give it up even for modern conveniences. In fact, too many modern conveniences almost made the old Indian throw up his job. Now, however, with increasing years and an adult family, the old man has concluded to accept the inevitable and become civilized.

Away up lying in the gateway between the peninsula which forms the eastern limits of Green Bay and Washington Island is a small island called Plum. It has a range light to guide the mariner in the difficult passage. Light and fog signals are stationed there in the Porte des Mort—gate of death. It is well named, for many a ship has foundered in the narrow, shoal-lined passageway. Many deaths have happened there and many more will probably happen in the future in spite of the precautions taken by the Government to protect the sailors.

The Code of Signals.

There is a clearly defined code of signals for the use of all mariners on the lakes. Every light station has its own peculiarities, every fog signal has its own notes. Bell buoys ring out warnings at all times and the flicker of a gas jet sends a vessel a couple of points off a bad shoal. The code is furnished to all ship masters, and by referring to it they can identify any station or buoy. Fixed red or fixed white lights disappearing and reappearing at regular intervals of time, as prescribed by this code, tell the story of the relative whereabouts of the ship.

White and red lights are the only ones used at the stations. Some, like

AWHEEL IN SIBERIA.

The Village Boys Had Never Before Seen a Bicycle.

During a bicycle journey through Siberia one summer I had occasion to travel several hundred miles along what is called the Great Siberian Highway. You will see by glancing at the map that this road connects the Siberian capital, Irkutsk, with European Russia. The distance is some three thousand miles, and along its course have been built nearly all the towns and villages of old Siberia.

Through these towns and villages I made my daily runs, and usually with a clamoring multitude of shouting boys and yelping dogs as my escort; for a bicycle was as yet a novelty in that part of the world, and in some of the more remote districts even a thing unknown. I remember, on entering a certain village just at dusk, when the streets were quite deserted, I came suddenly upon two village boys walking in the street. They did not see me until I flashed abruptly past them. They threw up their hands in bewilderment and shrieked out, "Chort eddott!" (The devil's coming!) and fled in terror to their homes. I rode on to the regular post station, ordered a frugal supper and prepared to pass the night in the "travelers' room."

In the meantime, the news of the "devil's" arrival had spread like wildfire through the village, and the post yard was soon swarming with village boys, peering the station master to let them have a peep at the marvelous "devil's carriage." With the "devil's" permission, the carriage was finally taken out to exhibit to the wondering crowd. When I had finished my meal I stole out unnoticed to observe the group of eagerurchins gathered round the object of their curiosity. One of their number, more presumptuous than the rest, had taken hold of the wheel, and was endeavoring to enlighten his young congregation on bicycle philosophy in general, and this wheel in particular. The handle bars, he knew, were to catch hold of, and the seat was to sit on, but he did not exactly know how it was propelled.

An inquisitive chap raised the question of balancing—how the bicycle could stand up without being held. This question was immediately seconded by the rest of the assembly, and put the self-elected teacher on his mettle. He asserted at once that that feat was easy enough to perform; but the more he tried to show them how, the more he realized its difficulty, until finally the bicycle got tangled up with his legs, and both went sprawling on the ground. This was the signal for a shout of derisive laughter from the crowd; but the little fellow was not to be defeated so ignominiously. He picked himself up, rubbed his head for a moment and meditated. Finally a happy thought struck him. "Oh, I know how it is!" he exclaimed, as he picked up the bicycle. "You see, when it falls over this way he puts down the prop" (pointing to the right pedal), "and when it falls that way he puts down the other." Then the self-appointed lecturer upon bicycles looked proudly around for approval.

"Why, of course," they all murmured, and in a tone of self-reproof that they had not thought of it before. And so the little village wiseacre at once maintained his reputation and impressed upon his associates how stupid they were not to have solved the problem for themselves.—St. Nicholas.

Poisonous Garden Plants.

Flowers of the jonquil, white hyacinth and snowdrop all possess a poisonous nature, the narcissus being also particularly deadly, so much so, indeed, that to chew a small scrap of one of the bulbs may result fatally, while the juice of the leaves is an emetic. The berries of the yew have killed many persons, and it is pretty well known nowadays that it is not safe to eat many peach pits or cherry kernels at once. The lobellias are all dangerous. Lady's slipper poisons in the same manner as does poison ivy. The bulbs seem to be the most harmful. Lilies of the valley are also as much so. There is enough opium in red poppies to do mischief; and the autumn crocus, if the blossoms are chewed, causes vomiting and purging. The leaves and flowers of the oleander are deadly, and the bark of the catalpa tree is very mischievous; the water dropwort, when not in flower, resembles celery, and is virulent.

A War-Time Hiding Place.

J. H. Gore writes an article for St. Nicholas describing some peculiar "Hiding Places in War Times." Those he tells about were all in one house in Virginia, near a town which changed hands, under fire, eighty-two times during the war. Mr. Gore says: With fall came the "fattening time" for the hogs; They were then brought in from the distant fields, where they had passed the summer, and put in a pen by the side of the road. And although within ten feet of the soldiers as they marched by, they were never seen, for the pen was completely covered by the winter's wood-pile, except at the back, where there was a board fence through whose cracks the corn was thrown in. Whenever the passing advance guard told us that an army was approaching, the hogs were hurriedly fed, so that the army might go by while they were taking their after-dinner nap and thus not reveal their presence by

an escaped grunt or squeal. Fortunately, the house was situated in a narrow valley, where the opportunities for bushwhacking were so great that the soldiers did not tarry long enough to search unsuspected wood-piles. On one occasion we thought the hogs were doomed. A wagon broke down near the house, and the soldier went to the wood-pile for a pole to be used in mending the break. Luckily, he found a stick to his liking without tearing the pile to pieces. This suggested that some nice straight pieces be always left conveniently near for such an emergency, in case it should occur again.

OFFICER WORSTED FOR ONCE.

Policeman Failed to Arrest Two Drunken Men and a Big Dog.

Ever since he joined the force Policeman Andy Murray has made a specialty of the arrest of "drunks," a line of duty for which he seems to be peculiarly fitted, and in the exercise of which he takes great delight. It was because of his reputation for always landing his man at the nearest patrol box unassisted that he undertook to arrest two intoxicated individuals single-handed on Monday night, and thereby came to grief. Andy was standing at 22d and Diamond streets shortly after dark when he saw an oddly assorted pair leaning up against the gate of the Odd Fellows' cemetery, both evidently under the influence of liquor. One was a man attired in full dress, wearing a high silk hat, who was holding a big Newfoundland dog by a chain. The other was a bicyclist, who was apparently too far gone to ride, but who still held on to his wheel.

Patrolman Murray grabbed each by the shoulder and started for the patrol box, but the prisoners wanted to argue. The trio came to a halt; the dog ran around them a couple of times, winding up the chain, and then suddenly, espying a cat, made a wild dash for the other side of the street. The unsteady prisoners fell over like tenpins, dragging their captor with them. In his fall Murray jammed one foot through the spokes of the bicycle's front wheel and, unable to extricate himself, he lay at the bottom of the heap until a brother officer came to his assistance. He now acknowledges that he bit off more than he could "chew."—Philadelphia Record.

Siberian and Russian.

Thomas G. Allen, Jr., writes an article on "The Boys of Siberia" for St. Nicholas. Mr. Allen says:

To begin with, the Siberian boy is not a Russian. I insist upon that distinction, because I know he would be sure to make it if he were here to speak for himself. "No, sir; I am not a Russian," one has often said to me, in polite correction; "I'm a Siberian." And he speaks in a way that leaves no room to doubt the sincerity of his pride. The reader may, perhaps, think this a distinction without a difference; but, from my personal observation, I should say that there is justification of intermixture of native blood with the Siberian-Russian. Generally speaking, the Siberian boy, as compared with the boy of European Russia, is by far the quicker-witted, more energetic, and more self-respecting. He has many more of the qualities that in the hour of his country's need go to make up the hero or patriotic soldier.

They say it takes a smart man to make a rascal. Whether this be true or not, certain it is that the class of men who have been sent as exiles to Siberia, especially the political prisoners, have generally been taken from the more intellectual classes of European Russia. The descendants of these exiles, on the other hand, being born and raised in Siberia, away from the harmful influences of a crowded population, have inherited natural intelligence without the incentives to misuse it. Furthermore, they know nothing about the disgrace of exile, and regard Siberia only with genuine pride as the land of their nativity.

An Innocent Civilian.

The Chinese peasant wears a turban, loose coat and short and very baggy trousers, all of blue. The Chinese soldier wears the same, with an overall sleeveless smock, or long waistcoat, buttoning on the right shoulder, edged down the neck, arms and skirt and down the front with broad "facings." The breast and back are decorated with a one-foot bull's-eye with characters on it. This is all the character the Chinese soldier possesses. The bull's-eye would be a very convenient mark for any enemy if the soldier would give him a chance of shooting him, but the bull's-eye is only worn to raise false hopes, for no sooner does he arrive dangerously near the enemy than he doffs the garb of war to disappear as an innocent civilian. He is usually armed with a muzzle-loader or standard, both equally harmless weapons. In the case of Gen. Liu's escort the uniform smocks had evidently not been used as nightshirts for more than a few weeks, the men were armed with Winchester and a few Martins, rusty, dirty and out of order, and wore about their middles a belt of some sixty rounds of solid-drawn brass cartridges.

It is surprising how many men have slouchy, careless business methods. The writer of this is one of them; the reader is probably another.